



National Interagency Fuels Technology Team Charter

I. BACKGROUND

The **National Interagency Fuels Technology Team (NIFTT)** is chartered by the National Interagency Fuels Coordination (NIFCG) Group and includes participation from federal wildland fire agencies and The Nature Conservancy (TNC). This charter replaces the Fire Regime Condition Class (FRCC) Guidebook and Technology Transfer Working Group Charter.

The NIFCG's purpose is to develop and implement "an effective, interagency fuels management program to address risks from severe fires in wildland urban interface communities and to restore healthy ecological systems in other wildland areas." The National Interagency Fuels Technology Team (NIFTT) is sponsored by the IFC to *coordinate, develop, and transfer* consistent, efficient, and science-based fuel and fire ecology technology.

A number of technical developments – designed to provide fuel, fire ecology, and vegetation information, along with associated tools and technology – are being implemented for use in assessment and planning by interagency, state, and private managers. There is a need to coordinate the implementation of the various products developed through these efforts and the associated technology transfer to managers, as well as a need to coordinate agency staff and financial support. Some of the larger efforts include FRCC, LANDFIRE, Fire Program Analysis (FPA), burn severity mapping, Fire Effects Monitoring and Inventory Protocol (FIREMON), and the Fire Ecology Assessment Tool (FEAT). The National Interagency Fuels Technology Team coordinates product implementation and associated technology transfer through, for example, the development of a fuel's fire behavior hazard measure, coordination with Agency Natural Resource Inventories, coordination of a strategic landscape hazardous fuels analysis, development of desired condition assessment techniques, and coordination of research results from Forest Service, Interior, Joint Fire Science, and other sources. Administrative units that provide operational support include TNC, the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC), the Rocky Mountain Research Station Missoula Fire Sciences Laboratory (MFSL), and the National Center for Earth Resources Observation and Science (EROS). Considerable additional support is contracted through universities and contracting businesses.

In addition, managers need field procedures, computer software, published information, and associated training to incorporate agency policies regarding the prioritization and design of hazardous fuel projects, vegetation management, and wildland fire management. NIFTT provides coordination and synthesis of these technical developments and information to support common management applications.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of NIFTT is to develop and implement a strategic approach that provides guidance, training, and application tools for the implementation of fuel and fire ecology assessment technologies. This approach is defined by the expectations of the National Fire Plan (NFP), the Federal Wildland Fire Policy, and the Healthy Forest Restoration Act/Healthy Forest Initiative (HFRA/HFI). In addition, many of the analyses within this approach were developed from the assumptions within the U.S. Department of Agriculture's and Department of the Interior's *Cohesive Strategies for Restoration of Fire-Adapted Ecosystems* and by the fire, land, and resource management planning policies of these respective agencies.

III. OPERATING STANDARDS

The following concepts are based on the interests and needs of all stakeholders and are identified as fundamental to the success of this group.

The National Interagency Fuels Technology Team (NIFTT) will

- provide leadership, coordination, and guidance for consistent inventory and monitoring programs, such as FRCC, LANDFIRE, FIREMON/FEAT, burn severity, Composite Burn Index (CBI), and coordination with agency and Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) inventory and monitoring programs;
- facilitate a consistent approach for determining, mapping, and use of measures that may be applied to evaluation of performance. Examples include FRCC, fuel fire behavior hazard, and burn severity, at local, state, tribal, and national levels;
- transfer fuel and fire ecology assessment technology, associated computer tools, and planning and implementation applications;
- establish and assist in the implementation of uniform, consistent, and cost-effective methods for assessing and monitoring conditions that correspond with the various agency accountability programs and the Government Performance and Results Act;
- collaborate with the Fire Learning Network (FLN) in achieving common objectives;
- collaborate with the LANDFIRE Project for effective technology transfer; and
- collaborate with the FPA project to assist in the development and implementation of fuel, fire ecology, and landscape assessment techniques.

IV. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of NIFTT are to

- develop methods and transfer nationally consistent fuel hazard measures;
- develop applications for reporting, planning, assessing, and monitoring conditions;

- expand and improve the processes for technology transfer of tools and scientific information related to fuel and fire ecology assessment;
- actively work to incorporate technology and tools in the National Wildland Fire Training and Qualification System, fire ecology and fuel management training curricula, ecosystem management training, university education, and other avenues of distribution;
- implement and improve Fire Regime Condition Class (FRCC) Guidebook technology;
- develop and transfer fuel's fire hazard assessment techniques;
- develop and transfer fire effects hazard assessment techniques;
- develop and transfer integrated assessment measures;
- actively participate in the LANDFIRE Project and conduct associated user training;
- actively assist FPA in implementing fuel assessment technology;
- actively participate in FLN to achieve common objectives;
- identify impediments to successful implementation of nationally consistent fuel performance measures and work to resolve these issues at the national level;
- transfer research results to improve information and applications;
- provide assistance to users of fuel and fire ecology technology and tools;
- provide a forum for the exchange of ideas relating to the issues that develop regarding use of guidebooks, LANDFIRE technology, and associated data and tools;
- improve methods, information, and LANDFIRE implementation tools through scientific peer review to achieve scientifically credible materials, thereby supporting users in producing credible assessments; and
- provide guidance and distribute technology and resources via websites, databases, and associated publications to support implementation of the National Fire Plan, Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003, Cohesive Strategies for Restoration of Fire-adapted Ecosystems, and land and fire management planning.

V. MEMBERSHIP

Members will include landscape ecologists, fire ecologists, fuel specialists, computer specialists, resource managers, and additional specialists from the following agencies and organizations: Bureau of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, TNC, USDA Forest Service, US DOI Geological Survey, and other state and private entities. To be included as a member the individual must contribute substantive administrative or technical effort toward achievement of the objectives.

VI. FOCUS ITEMS FOR FISCAL YEARS 2005 – 2008

- Implement and improve the Interagency FRCC Guidebook
- Develop and implement a training program for application of assessment tools and techniques using LANDFIRE data to achieve National Fire Plan objectives

- Develop a fuel's fire hazard performance measure
- Develop methods and tools for integrated fire, fuel, and resource assessment techniques at multiple landscape levels and provide support to the Integrated Landscape Design demonstration projects
- Implement a cohesive approach to using burn severity and FIREMON/FEAT for mapping burn severity and updating FRCC and fire and fuel hazard input maps
- Actively assist FPA in implementing fuel assessment technology
- Assess agency vegetation, fire, and fuel inventory systems for ways to integrate, share data, and implement LANDFIRE data into management applications

VII. INTEGRATION OF KEY PROGRAMS

1. The FRCC Guidebook implementation and LANDFIRE are inherently linked. The FRCC Guidebook was a precursor to LANDFIRE. The FRCC science peer review identified the lack of science-based, spatially explicit reference condition data and estimate of variation to be the major problems with Guidebook version 1.0. However, the FRCC Guidebook working group does not have the technology or the science network to produce these products, but LANDFIRE does and is providing the version 2.0 reference conditions and broad-scale spatial input data. FRCC Guidebook coordination, help, training, tools, and web material upgrade will continue to be guided and funded by the IFC at approximately 500k per year. Future improvements in reference conditions and spatial data are provided as a LANDFIRE product at an approximately equal value.

2. LANDFIRE data and technology transfer is the foundation for measures and treatment prioritization to improve ecological condition (measured by FRCC), reduce hazard (measured by fuel's fire hazard metric), and achieve integrated landscape design objectives. LANDFIRE technology transfer will be implemented by NIFTT and guided by the LANDFIRE business leads, IFC representatives, and other key representatives. LANDFIRE will fund this effort at approximately 500k per year. The IFC and other participating groups will provide additional funding to achieve desired objectives.